ANCIENT SKIES

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THE SEARCH FOR ANCIENT AQUANAUTS

BY HARRY LEBELSON*

A glimpse of another world may lie hidden among the myths of our earliest civilizations. A number of scientists and authors have been exploring these myths in detail. Although their conclusions give little credence to ancient myths as proof of Extra-terrestrial Intelligence (ETI) contact,they confirm such tales as the Sumerian legend of the Oannes. These fishlike beings, resembling a man, visited the ancient cultures on and off for 1,500 years.

During the reign of Alexander the Great,the historical records of Berossus, a priest in the city of Babylon, preserved for posterity accounts of early Babylon (Sumeria) and the visitations of the Oannes. In his documents, Berossus states "There made its appearance from the Persian Gulf during an early time in Babylonian history, an animal endowed with reason, called 'Oannes'." The historian goes on to describe the animal as fishlike. "The whole body was like that of a fish with a fish's head and the feet of a man joined to a fish's tail.His voice too and language were articulate and human." This being he claimed was amphibious. "It conversed with men in the daytime, then when the sun set it would plunge into the sea and remain there for the night."

Berossus tells how the population at that time was primitive and, until Oannes came, were like beasts of the field. The beings were described as teachers who gave the people insight into letters, the sciences and art. Using existing cuneiform and pictographic records dating back several thousand years before his time,Berossus tells how the Oannes taught the people to found temples, to compile laws and explained to them the principles of geometrical knowledge. In other words, "they taught them everything to humanize mankind," claimed Berossus.

The astronomer Carl Sagan seems to be in agreement with the historian's documentation when he states "I support the contention that a major cultural change did take place with the advent of the Oannes." Existing records show that in addition to the Oannes, Berossus chronicled a succession of sea creatures who appeared over the course of several generations. Sagan goes on to say in his book, Intelligent Life in the Universe, that "These beings were interested in instructing mankind. Each knew the mission and accomplishments of his predecessors. When a great inundation threatens the survival of this knowledge, steps are taken to insure its preservation. Thereby, the access of Berossus to antidiluvian records is formally explained."

As far back as 1966, concepts regarding the existence of amphibious beings with high intelligence were being considered by some serious scholars. In their book, Intelligence in the Universe, Roger MacGowan and Frederick Ordway state that humans, being land animals, tend to think in terms of land animals when considering intelligence. "A liquid environment," claim the authors, "provides more buoyancy and support for animal bodies than does atmospheric gas.For this reason, a marine environment may be expected to develop many species that are larger than most land animal species." They propose that if larger bodies can support larger brains,one might expect to find superior intelligence among larger marine animals. MacGowan and Ordway were tempted to assume that because of their larger potential size, the great variety of life, the good stable environment of the oceans and the competition among species, the majority of intelligent extrasolar life would be marine.

They contend that "A few ocean species have developed other appendages more suited to tool manipulation. Some other ocean creatures could develop the equivalent of human arms and hands." However, "The patently high intelligence of certain whales and dolphins raises the question of whether tool manipulating appendages are really vital to the development of superior intelligence." This last comment makes it difficult for MacGowan and Ordway to definitively state that some intelligent extrasolar life may be marine as opposed to land dwelling.

But why should these creatures have come from the sea? Dr. Dale Russell, curator of fossil vertebrates at the National Museum of Canada in Ottawa, offers some observations about the evolution of non-human intelligence. "Perhaps high intelligence may be a natural result wherever life evolves in the universe and maybe man's general body form is no accident," he speculates. Russell goes so far as to suggest that man could have evolved from a species of dinosaur, had they not become extinct.

If in fact these creatures did evolve as fishlike beings, perhaps they found our planet hospitable, since 90% of it is covered with water.

Robert Temple, author of The Sirius Mystery, supports the theory that Earth may have been visited by intelligent beings from the stars, though he cannot say for sure whether we were visited by survivors of an aquatic planet whose sun went supernova. He does confirm that he has found certain startling myths in the way the ancients viewed the universe.

In The Sirius Mystery, Temple explores the origin of the Legend of the Nommos. These intelligent amphibious creatures allegedly came from the Sirius star system to set up society here on Earth. This ancient myth had been handed down orally from generation to generation among members of the Dogon tribe in Mali, West Africa. In his book, Temple

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credits responsibility for its preservation and recent resurrection to two French anthropologists, Marcel Griaule and Germaine Dieterlen. In an article entitled "A Sudanese Sirius System", which appeared in 1950 in the French "Journal de la Societe des Africanistes", the anthropologists reported on four Sudanese peoples who had specific information about the Sirius star system, which seemed impossible for any primitive tribe to know. The tribes were the Dogon in Bandiagara, the Bambara and the Bozo in Segou and the Minianka in Koutiala. The main investigations, however, were carried out among the Dogon people between 1946 and 1950, when four major informants (priests of the Dogon) were interviewed.

"The Dogon legacy imparted to Griaule and Dieterlen is primarily oral, though there are many related physical objects which constitute important physical evidence," states Temple. He goes on to say that the Dogon had a system of 11,616 written ideogrammatic signs which expressed concepts and things, which they used with immense subtlety and complexity. The Dogon did not, however, use written characters to represent sounds or to form sentences.

The Dogon's most secret religious tradition was their knowledge of the Sirius star system. It consisted of Sirius A, presently the brightest star in the sky, Sirius B, a white dwarf and the tiniest form of visible star in the universe, and the possible existence of a Sirius C, whose existence has yet to be proven. The anthropologists, in recording the Dogon beliefs, make clear that the bright star of Sirius A is not as important to the Dogon as the tiny Sirius B. It is this star named "Digitaria" by the tribes, that is claimed to be the home of the amphibious beings called "Nommos".

Temple points out how the Dogon compared the heavenly motions within our Milky Way to the circulation of the blood. The planets and their companion bodies were considered the blood and, how they travelled around each other was symbolically thought to be the circulation. These African tribesmen likened both the star system of Sirius and our own solar system to a Cosmic placenta. Our own solar system is referred to as "Ogo's placenta", the word Ogo meaning the "Fox", or impure Earth. Sirius and its companion stars are referred to as "Nommo's placenta", Nommo being the collective name for those amphibious creatures who set up society on Earth, and are more or less the equivalent of the Sumerian and Babylonian tradition of Oannes. The landing of the Nommo on our Earth is called "the day of the fish", and the planet they came from in the Sirius system is known as the (pure) earth of the day of the fish...not (our) impure Earth.

"Their religious beliefs tell how Ogo represents man, in all his cosmic impurity and how Nommo came to Earth, crushed the fox (Ogo-man) and ended feudal development, leaving the best elements of civilization in its wake for us to possess," states author Temple. Legend goes on to tell how the Nommo will once again come to Earth and study the progress made by man. These native beliefs were among those recorded by Griaule and Dieterlen, along with other astronomical and scientific theories. Some of that information obtained by the anthropologists included facts about our Earth and the solar system that defy explanation. The Dogon knew that the Earth turns on its own axis, revolves around the Sun, has a calendar year of 12 months and that 365 days make up one calendar year.

In addition to their scholarly Journal article, Griaule and Dieterlen produced a book, Le Renard Pale (the Pale Fox), published in Paris in 1965. These joint findings do not draw any definitive conclusions of extraterrestrial contact with the Dogon, but merely suggest the possibility. In the book they discuss in detail Dogon belief and knowledge as it relates to astronomy and the Sirius system. The Dogon also related specialized data to the anthropologists regarding the nature of the planets in our solar system and the coming to Earth of the Nommos. Temple, in The Sirius Mystery, describes the accuracy of that information. "Of the Moon, they say it is dry and dead, they know Saturn has a ring around it and that the planets are stars that turn around something." He then details the descriptions given to these scholars describing the descent to Earth of the Nommos as being reminiscent of a large object with a thunderous exhaust leaving in its wake a whirlwind of dust and dirt. "The violence of the impact roughened the ground as it skidded along," stated the Dogon. They went on to describe the noise as "The echoing of four large stone blocks being struck with stones by our children." The direction the ark or object which landed on the Earth was to the north-east of Dogon country in the direction of Egypt and the Middle East.

The tribesmen also spoke of the Sigui ceremony, a sixty year ritual denoting the renovation of the world. The Kanaga sign, which resembles the letter "H", connotes the sixty year ceremonies which represent the re-creation of the world by the Dogon God "amma" and instruction of that world by his son Nommo.Temple implies that the knowledge of such a cycle indicates a continuing tradition of observation by a priesthood with astronomical inclinations. He then details the influence and importance of the Sirius star system to Egyptian culture as evidenced by the use of Sirius, whose rising formed the basis of the Egyptian calendar. The foundation for the calendar was the star clocks, or rising of the stars, by which the months, weeks and days were arrived at. The main focus of attention, Sirius, formed the basis of this calendar, with the last star of the constellation Orion rising above the horizon one hour before Sirius.

For this reason Orion also became significant in Egyptian mythology and religion. It was considered to be the companion of both Sirius and the constellation of the Great Dog, of which Sirius was a part. "If Orion was the companion of Sirius," Temple states, "it could then be considered interchangeable with Osiris, a known companion of Isis, the chief Egyptian god. "This information was ascertained through professors Otto Neugebauer and Richard Parker, authors of Egyptian Astronomical Texts, who identified the star Sirius with the famous goddess Isis." Temple goes on to say "We know that the 'companion of Sirius' is in reality Sirius B, therefore, it is conceivable that Osiris-as-Orion, 'the companion of Sirius', is a stand-in for the invisible true companion, Sirius B."

Egyptologist Professor Wallis Budge tells us that the oldest and simplest form of the name Osiris is a hieroglyph of a throne and an eye. The eye positioned either above or below the throne, or seat. This interpretation by the Egyptians suggests Sirius B, or Osiris, as revolving around Isis, or Sirius A. The Bozo Tribe in Mali, one of the four interviewed by Griaule and Dieterlen, related that Sirius B was known to them as the eye star. They also describe Sirius A as seated. Both these facts parallel the findings of Professor Budge and seem to indicate, according to Robert Temple, that "the Sumerian culture from whom the Dogon inherited their information about Sirius, and the ancient Egyptians, derived their primeval gods from some common but exceedingly ancient source which could not have been the result of borrowing."

Scholar Zecharia Sitchin, like Robert Temple, attempts to go beyond unanswered speculation to show that Earth has been visited by advanced beings from another planet. In his book, The 12th Planet, Sitchin attempts to decipher clues left by ancient Sumerian texts, the Bible and Mesopotamian legends. His analysis of these documents and ultimate conclusion of his book, suggests that Earth was settled by the "nefilim", or eagle-men, anthropomorphic beings wearing uniforms, who brought civilization to our

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planet in the area known to us as ancient Mesopotamia. Sitchin uses these texts to show how these beings came to Earth from a planet as yet undiscovered by man. While Sitchin, with over 30 years of scholarship behind him, advocates visitation to Earth by astronauts from another planet, Sagan and Temple cautiously present their information in an atmosphere of reserved skepticism.

Interestingly, certain patterns associated with the Oannes and Nommos mythology constantly crop up in police reports and the media. In 1971, on a grassy field at Mulhouse-Riedisheim, France, a large circular imprint with the letter H inside it was found burned into the grass shortly after a rumored UFO sighting. (Note: the letter H represented the Kanaga sign in Dogon mythology, a symbol for the sixty year ceremonies marking the return of the Nommos and the renovation of the world.)

The UFO literature is replete with reports of witnesses seeing fishlike creatures with webbed hands and feet emerging from landed UFOs, but such events stand alone as an outpost on the borderlands of science. Even today as scientists and anthropologists continue to discover possible new explanations for man's early acquisition of knowledge and development, much skepticism prevails.

It was over 20 years ago that British marine biologist Sir Alister Hardy proposed that man might be descended from an aquatic ape. Since that time others have elaborated on Hardy's ideas. In a recent article about Alister Hardy in Science Digest, author Lyall Watson suggests that there is plenty of room for an alternative explanation to evolution. He states "The fossils that decorate our family tree are so scarce that there are still more scientists than specimens." He also points out that all the physical evidence we have for human evolution can still be placed, with room to spare, inside a single coffin!

Even if it is proven that man is not descended from an aquatic ape, he may very well have been helped along the evolutionary road by aquatic beings from the stars.

[Ed.Note] For a provocative discussion of the hypothesis that our ancestors might have been amphibious reptilian creatures, see Flying Serpents and Dragons, by R. A. Boulay. The book is available from Galaxy Books, P.O. Box 8542, Clearwater, Florida 34618 USA.

GENESIS SEVEN

BY LEN FARRA*

The solution to the ancient astronaut mystery is hidden in the deeper meaning behind the mystical number seven. For thousands of years it has been staring us in the face and yet, nobody has appreciated its significance.

Numbers have long played a prominent part in religion and often the same ones were used in a similar manner in widely separated cultures in the Old World. One, for example, represents God; three, a trinity; four, the directions; five, the center and the four outer points. The four and five-point patterns are reflected in the alignment of many early religious buildings,both in the Old and New Worlds. Seven, however, has been the most significant number of all. We find it, throughout the ages, weaving its way through numerous religious and secular writings in many cultures. It is well represented in modern times in the names of commercial products such as drinks, cars, aeroplanes and perfume. There are traditions of seven seas, continents, rivers, trees, mountains, wonders of the world, years of bad luck and days of the week. Numerous tales have been told over the years, around the world, of the adventures of seven men and some people, so it is said, develop a seven year itch.

Seven has been used in ritual and tradition among various native American tribes, Hindus, Buddhists, Israelites and other Semites.Throughout the stories in the Bible and in Jewish folklore, famous characters engage in sevenfold activities, or father seven children. Moses, it is said, was a seven month baby, married one of seven sisters and died in the seventh month. Lamech lived for 777 years and had 77 children, etcetera. For thousands of years millions of people around the world have been obsessed with the number seven. Nobody has previously provided a satisfactory explanation for this peculiarity although various scholars have tried.

When the Europeans colonized the New World they destroyed much of the native culture. Sufficient, however, was recorded to enable us to see that similar traditions and customs prevailed throughout the pre-Christian world. Purification by water and sacred fires featured in many religions and the cross was universally used as a symbol long before it was adopted by the Church. Not only were there identical symbolism and rituals around the ancient world, but also the so-called myths followed suit. Both civilized and primitive peoples had traditions of a great "man" who, thousands of years ago, had visited Earth and helped to civilize the peoples of mankind. The description given to him was always the same and, universally, he was linked with certain catastrophic events said to have occurred during his visit. Invariably, in some way or other, he was connected with the number seven in a manner which throws light on its significance. He was also associated with one particular star constellation. These stars featured prominently in all religions of the ancient world. Temples were aligned to them and religious rituals took place, everywhere, when they appeared. They were frequently acknowledged as the source of all life and the place of origin of mankind. Sometimes they were represented by goddesses or young women.

Incredible events occurred on Earth 5000 years ago. The great early civilizations all sprang up, fully developed, at that time and, in many ways, their peoples were far more advanced than those who succeeded them.Where they came from nobody has been able to satisfactorily explain. Scientists scan the depths of space for signs of extraterrestrial life. Their time, however, could more profitably be spent sifting through the great mass of evidence which suggests that 5000 years ago our planet was visited by the "elder brothers of mankind".

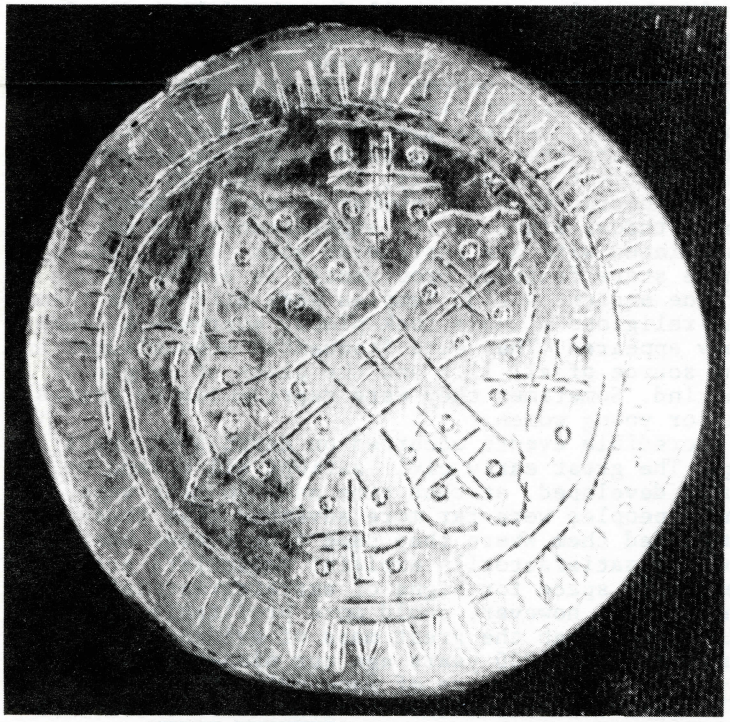
* Mr. Farra is the author of Genesis Seven, a book which considers the significance of the ubiquitous number seven and provides a thought-provoking study of Earth's prehistory as being far different from what is presently accepted. Mr. Farra is an author and world traveler. His address is 2 The Albany, Sunset Avenue,Woodford Green,Essex,ENGLAND IG8 OTJ. Genesis Seven is available from Vantage Press,Inc., 516 West 34th St., New York, NY 10001 USA.

FULL MEASURE, an oversize (8 1/2" x 11") book in softcover, is available from Stonehenge Viewpoint, 2821 De La Vina St., Santa Barbara, CA 93105 USA. Edited by Donald L. Cyr, the book is a compilation of several essays on measures, measurements, numbers, distances, units and other fascinating information.

ZECHARIA SITCHIN's latest book, Genesis Revisited, is now available in paperback from Avon Books, New York.The book's subtitle, "Is Modern Science Catching Up With Ancient Knowledge?", tells what it is about. The book will be available in hardcover from Bear & Co, P.O. Drawer 2860, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504 USA. Bear & Co. is also planning to republish all of Mr. Sitchin's former books in hardcover, beginning with The Lost Realms. His other books are The 12th Planet, The Stairway to Heaven, and The Wars of Gods and Men.

WHILE WATCHING A DUTCH TELEVISION PROGRAM in which owners show their antiques, paintings and rare items to professionals to find out the story, data and value of these items, I noticed a small bronze and gold "plaque" with a cross surrounded by a text on one side and all text on the other side. Nobody recognized the script. One expert on the program opined that the object could be pre-Sumerian, or pre-Etruscan, perhaps thousands of years old and worth millions. After the TV program, the object got special attention in the newspapers.

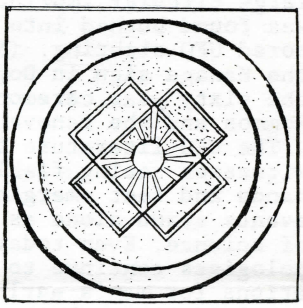
I wanted to learn more about the object so I was able to get in touch with the owner, who was kind enough to send me some photographs. We call the object a "plaque",because it is certainly not a coin. The owner has had the plaque for some thirty years. While browsing in a bric-a-brac store in Italy, he bought a lump of wax he needed to make a seal. When he melted the wax down, the plaque appeared. He has sent photos of the plaque to several museums, in Leiden, London, Berlin and others, but nobody has been able to recognize the script.



The plaque's diameter is 4.9cm (about 2 inches), it is 6.0mm thick and weighs 113 grams. The plaque consists of 10.15 full percent of bronze and 1.164 full percent of 24 carat gold. The edge is hammered without inscription. See accompanying oversize photos of the plaque's two sides. Note that the back side might be inverted.

As the cross is the symbol of the 12th planet,the planet of the crossing, would the plaque with its strange script refer to the 12th planet? Both the owner and I would welcome comments and ideas about the plaque and script from Society members.

Mrs. Marilynn Visser, Koningsholster 90, 6573 VT Beek-Ubbergen, HOLLAND.



[Ed.Note] Note the similarity between the front side of the plaque and the strange marking near the Plain of Nazca in Peru. See sketch of marking at right and the article in Ancient Skies 15:1.

MEMBER EXPEDITION TO TURKEY scheduled for August-September 1991 has been cancelled due to the Persian Gulf crisis.

A MEMBER EXPEDITION TO GERMANY is being arranged for August 1991. The group will depart Chicago's O'Hare Airport on Monday, August 12, 1991 for a direct flight to Frankfurt, Germany. About one week will be spent in touring the Rhine River valley, staying at authentic castles and then visiting Bonn and Cologne. We will then fly to Berlin for three or four days prior to attending the Berlin World Conference on August 23 and 24. The group will depart Berlin on Sunday, August 25 to return to Chicago via Frankfurt. Details and prices are now being arranged. Anyone wishing to participate in this delightful trip should contact the Society Headquarters as soon as possible.

THE NEXT WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE ANCIENT ASTRONAUT SOCIETY will be held at the Hotel Berlin, in Berlin, Germany on August 23 and 24, 1991. Arrival day is Thursday, August 22 and departure day is Sunday, August 25. Those who take part in the Member Expedition to Germany, discussed above, will have included the cost of the hotel and conference in Berlin. Anyone else wishing to attend the Berlin Conference should write directly to the Society's office in Switzerland for prices and reservations. The address is: Ancient Astronaut Society, Baselstrasse 1, 4532 Feldbrunnen/SO, SWITZERLAND.

20TH ANNIVERSARY WORLD CONFERENCE will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada USA in August, 1993. The exact dates and the hotel will be determined soon. Mark your calendar now for an exciting celebration of the Society's twentieth anniversary.

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